



MILEPOST

GEORGIA

Includes CONNECTOR...of particular interest to GDOT employees

Fall 2014

Taking the "routine" out
of routine maintenance

Environmentally Speaking

Georgia Express Lanes: Addressing Congestion

Natasha Davis Makes Engineering Exciting for Girls



Commissioner's Column

Long-term solutions needed



This summer, Congress passed and the president signed short-term legislation to extend funding of federal surface transportation through May 2015. The \$10.8 billion stopgap averted an immediate crisis as the Highway Trust Fund was on the verge of running out of funds.

However, this 10-month patch is inadequate for the long-term planning needed for transportation projects. It provides no certainty that come spring a large, multi-year federal funding measure will see fruition. We need long-term solutions.

In August, I presented to the first meeting of the Joint Study Committee on Critical Transportation Infrastructure Funding. The committee, comprised of state House and Senate lawmakers and citizens, is charged with weighing and recommending alternative methods for funding Georgia's transportation infrastructure needs. I shared with them that Georgia has the 10th largest road system in the nation and that we have a good system – despite spending less on transportation per capita than most any other state. I also said that we cannot sustain the system without future reliable investment in transportation.

This issue of MILEPOST features our maintenance personnel. These unsung heroes work in all types of weather, day and night, to maintain and keep our highways safe. Read about our maintenance folks beginning on page 12.

GDOT provides a number of programs to assist communities. These include Quick Response projects that address safety and congestion; and Gateway Grants that enhance aesthetics and contribute to economic development. See pages 6 and 16.

We continue to expand the Georgia Express Lanes network with construction starting on two projects. On page 5 read how managed lanes offer metro commuters choice and reliable travel times.

There are changes at the top end of I-285 – an increased 65 mph maximum speed and new Variable Speed Limits. On page 7, you will learn why we say “slow down to get there faster.”

Keith Golden, P.E.

MILEPOST

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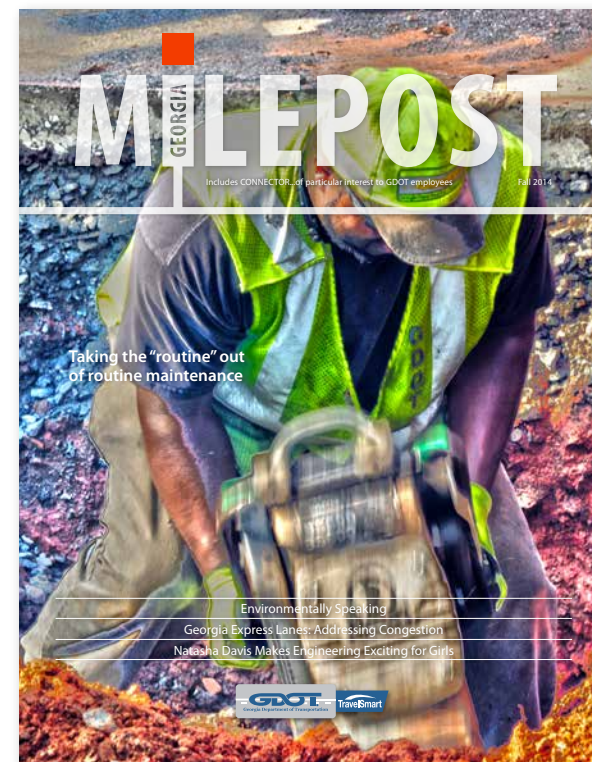
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What is TravelSmart?



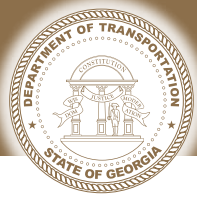
Georgia DOT is engaged in all aspects of mobility. In addition to roads and bridges, we're involved in public transit, general aviation, rail, waterways, and bike and pedestrian programs.

To reflect the larger picture, we've launched TravelSmart - GDOT's umbrella of transportation services and programs. TravelSmart embodies GDOT's approach to applying innovative engineering, customer-friendly design and cost-effective solutions to all facets of our transportation system.

The TravelSmart tag is a reminder that Georgia DOT works to keep Georgia moving - on all modes of transportation and in all parts of Georgia.

On the cover: Keith Monette, of District 7, steadies the Wacker Packer as he compacts soil around a repaired pipe in a sinkhole in Cobb County.

Photo: CEDRIC MOHR cmohr@dot.ga.gov



ACROSS THE BOARD

Board elects new leaders.



L-R: Robert Brown, Emily Dunn, Don Grantham

At the August STB meeting **Don Grantham** (CD 12) of Augusta was elected Chair, **Emily Dunn** (CD 9) of Blue Ridge was elected Vice Chair, and **Robert L. Brown, Jr.** (CD 4) of Decatur was elected Secretary.

Grantham, the immediate past Vice Chair, was re-elected to a five year term on the Board earlier this year. Dunn is serving her first five-year term on the Board, and Brown is in his second full term.

Grantham recognized the outstanding leadership of outgoing Chair Jay Shaw. "The Department of Transportation is in a better place today than it was several years ago, and that is due to the great leadership we have had on the Board and the dedicated employees of the Agency. I am excited to work with all my fellow Board members to be sure Georgia will continue to be the number one state in the country - for the best roads and the best DOT. We want to keep working with Governor Deal, the legislature and DOT staff to ensure that we keep moving forward."

Bridge named for former board member Parham.



The **Bobby Parham Bridge** over the Oconee River on Highway 49 in Milledgeville was dedicated in July in honor of **Bobby Parham**, a State Transportation Board member from 2009 to 2013. Parham is a well-known public servant and Baldwin County resident, who served as a state representative for 35 years.

Former STB Chairman Jay Shaw served with Parham in both capacities.

"Bobby was the go-to guy for anything with transportation and motor vehicles," Shaw said. "Everybody at the Capitol and on the DOT board loved him. Bobby could get things done."

Wellborn recognized by Garden Club of Georgia.



Board member **Sam Wellborn** received the Garden Club of Georgia's 2014 Certificate of Merit award in recognition of his efforts in civic beautification, horticulture and conservation. It is the highest honor bestowed by the Club on non-members. Wellborn has previously received awards from the Columbus Botanical Garden and

Keep Columbus Beautiful. He is active with the Columbus Gateways Foundation and works tirelessly to expand Georgia DOT's Wildflower Program.

Board pays tribute to former GDOT Commissioner Tom Coleman.



J. Tom Coleman led a full and productive life. He was GDOT commissioner from 2000 to 2003. He was also a public servant, patriot, businessman, community leader, educator, athlete and devoted family man. Tom Coleman, a driving force behind the Truman Parkway, passed away in June, just after the final phase was completed.

At the July meeting, the Board issued a resolution memorializing Coleman for "his devoted and commendable service to the Georgia Department of Transportation, the City of Savannah, Chatham County and to the people of the State of Georgia."

Coleman, a Savannah native, graduated from Georgia Institute of Technology where he was a captain of the football team. He was a school teacher and football coach; served as an infantry captain in the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict, and continued his service in the U.S. Army Reserves; he founded the construction company Bonitz of Georgia and was board chair for 60 years. Coleman served the people of Savannah on the city council, chaired the county commission, and was a state senator for nearly 15 years.

The resolution states "Tom Coleman was a man devoted to his family, an amazing community leader, a selfless public servant, a successful businessman and a gentleman that will be missed by all Georgians."

The 14-member State Transportation Board determines policy and generally governs Georgia DOT. Each member is elected by a caucus of Georgia General Assembly members from their specific congressional district. Board members serve staggered five-year terms.

State Transportation Board, Congressional District 1

What drives Ann Purcell?

By Liz Rothman

Ann Purcell has seen many roles, titles and honors. The wife, mother and grandmother is a businesswoman, genealogist, horse enthusiast, and assistant dog trainer (specializing in black labs). She was a teacher, served in the Georgia House of Representatives and is in her second year on the State Transportation Board.

Purcell represents Congressional District 1 in southeast Georgia, including the ports of Savannah and Brunswick and the entire coastline. She currently serves on the board of the World Trade Center in Savannah and formerly served on the State Board of Technical and Adult Education. She recently received a prestigious award from the President of the Federal Republic of Germany for her efforts to build cultural and economic bridges between Germany and the state of Georgia.

People tend to call me "Ms. Purcell" or "Ms. Ann." But I am Ann – no different from anyone else. If I get to the point that I think that I am, someone ought to take me aside and say "you better get your focus back."

Early years Purcell is a native Georgian - raised in Glennville and lives in Rincon. *We say R-I-N-K-E-N. I grew up in a Christian-oriented family. We went to church on Sunday morning and evening. Frequently on Sunday afternoon, 30 or 40 family members would go to the river and talk and picnic – no fishing or swimming. I was an only child until I was a senior in high school. That's when my parents adopted my sister, Nan; we are very close.*

My mother was my best friend – I could talk with her and share my thoughts. She would give me suggestions, but then let me find my own way.

My father was a politician in Tattnall County. When my daddy said, "Do you want to go with me?" I always said, "Yes, sir." Through him I saw that transportation is a key to economic development. He was instrumental in getting Highway 144 open to the public - it had been closed because of Camp Stewart (now Fort Stewart) blocking direct access. I saw what opening that highway did - dirt roads began to be paved and better routes developed across southeastern Georgia. Often, jobs were created.



Photo: CEDRIC MOHR cmohr@dot.ga.gov

Finding roots Purcell was 14 when she discovered genealogy. *Often while visiting family, I wrote notes and took pictures with my brownie camera. In 1976 she self-published her first book – Purcells of South Georgia and Other Related Families. She encourages others to dig into their ancestry and record it as well.*

Young adult Ann, a Georgia Southern graduate, married Dent, a medical student, 48 years ago. They had three children and moved around for Dent's education and residency. *But we were too far from home. Our goal was to work our way back to our parents and our families. We are outdoors people. We bought a farm in the country and made Effingham County our home. We were gentlemen farmers – we raised labs, and hay for our horses and cattle. I was a good stable janitor.*

Setting goals After following her dad's local political campaigns, her own sights were on the state legislature. Her 17+ year tenure in the Georgia House included chairing the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. She served on numerous committees – some years more than any other legislator.

I set goals and I go after them. I believe that there's no failure - there's only the degree of accomplishment. You may not reach a goal completely. The main thing is to stay focused and not give up.

On board After retiring from the Georgia House, a position for her district opened on the State Transportation Board. *I still wanted to serve. I thought there are more things I can do – other callings – and transportation is close to my heart...*

It's rewarding to see legislation I worked on in the Georgia House coming to fruition - like the deepening of the Port of Savannah.

This Board knows that roads connect across county and district lines. We don't always agree, but we work together to make a successful result for Georgia.

The Commissioner, department leadership, and the staff in D5 continuously educate me. I'm always asking them why we do this, why this way, and why is that better than what I'm thinking? I rely on them and appreciate their input. All are working for a better transportation system for Georgia.

Life's joys *I love what I do. Family and friends are so important. My husband is a super fellow. We have three wonderful children and eight marvelous grandchildren. One of my favorite things is to take our grandchildren on excursions. We pack peanut butter and jelly sandwiches along with a Coke and visit a park or historic site. They listen, take notes and pictures, and write a summary of what they see in their own books. It's a fun way to share my love of history with them.*

I was, always, determined that I wanted to help others – to make a little bit of difference. And by helping others, I help myself. When I'm gone, I just want it to be said that I helped someone.



Carr named to UGA “40 Under 40.”

Georgia DOT Director of Planning **Toby Carr** was named by The University of Georgia Alumni Association to their **40 Under 40 Class of 2014**. Honorees are selected based on their commitment to a lifelong relationship with UGA and their impact in business, leadership, community, artistic, research, educational and/or philanthropic endeavors. Carr is a 2001 UGA graduate.



Matthews receives national ASHE award.

Tim Matthews, a regional coordinator in the TIA Office, was honored by the American Society of Highway Engineers (ASHE) with the 2014 **National Member of the Year Award**. The ASHE Georgia Chapter noted his willingness to volunteer his time, serve on committees and champion the benefits of ASHE membership. Matthews, a registered professional engineer, has been with the Department for 11 years.



DeGrace honored by Garden Club.

Chris DeGrace, landscape architect in the Office of Maintenance, was awarded the Garden Club of Georgia’s 2014 **Certificate of Merit** for his efforts in civic beautification, horticulture and conservation. It is the highest honor bestowed on non-members. DeGrace manages Georgia DOT’s Wildflower Program and has been with GDOT for 12 years.

Jesup Train Depot received an **Excellence in Rehabilitation** honor from **Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation**. The award recognizes projects that make compatible use of a building through repair, alterations or additions while preserving features that convey its historic value.

The early 20th century depot was abandoned in the 1960s, and later gutted due to a fire. In 2005, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved funding for a Transportation Enhancement (TE) award to restore and preserve the structure. The award, **administered through Georgia DOT’s Transportation Enhancement program**, provided 80 percent of the funds; the city of Jesup matched 20 percent. Today the structure serves as a depot, as well as a renewed community asset for public meetings.

Atlanta Beltline receives first global award.

Atlanta Beltline was named “**the best environmental rehabilitation project in the world**” by the International Real Estate Federation. The Prix d’Excellence Award highlights the Beltline’s renovation of the 17-acre Historic Fourth Ward Park and the Eastside Trail. Georgia DOT supports InvestAtlanta and Atlanta Beltline Inc. (ABI) on transportation and right-of-way related matters. GDOT made 3.5 miles of former rail corridor available for the BeltLine; administered several Transportation Enhancement (TE) awards; and supported the application resulting in an \$18 million TIGER V grant from USDOT. The Atlanta Beltline utilizes historic freight rail rights-of-way to connect 45 neighborhoods around the heart of Atlanta with parks, trails and transit and transportation infrastructure. Visit www.beltline.org.



GDOT annual report wins first place in national competition.

- GDOT’s 2012 **Annual Report** won first place in the annual report category in the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) 2014 Blue Pencil & Gold Screen competition. The report beat out competitors including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

- NAGC also recognized GDOT’s **Office of Communications** with an Award of Excellence for an **op/ed about the National Environmental Policy Act** (NEPA) and GDOT’s efforts to build and maintain our transportation system while protecting our natural resources. The piece was done in conjunction with Glenn Bowman. To read it, visit www.dot.ga.gov/informationcenter/pressroom/Viewpoint/NEPA.pdf



- The fall/winter 2013 **Milepost** received a 2014 APEX Award for Publication Excellence.

Addressing traffic congestion

Georgia Express Lanes: metro Atlanta’s new travel option

By Lillian Jackson

Within five years Georgia will have about 70 miles of tolled Express Lanes to address traffic congestion.

By the year 2020, **Georgia Express Lanes** will be a common travel alternative for commuters, providing a new option to help address some of metro Atlanta’s most congested corridors. Toll lanes will be constructed alongside our existing interstates, providing a choice for drivers to pay a fee to bypass congestion when they need to and a clearer way for transit vehicles.

Whether you need to make it to a job interview on time, pick up the kids, get to the stadium before tip-off or you simply want to escape the congested regular lanes, Georgia Express Lanes offer drivers a choice for more reliable and predictable trip times. They can “*Get in. Get going.*”

Currently, there is one Express Lane system in metro Atlanta, on I-85 from just inside I-285 north to Old Peachtree Road. Steadily gaining in ridership since its opening in 2012, signs notify drivers of current toll rates that increase during peak travel times (7 am – 9 am, for example) and decrease during off-peak times (8 pm – 10 pm, for example). The posted rates help drivers decide whether to pay to use the Express Lanes or to remain in the general I-85 lanes. The choice is always up to the driver!

Two new projects in the Georgia Express Lanes system break ground fall 2014.

Unlike the existing I-85 express lanes, these new projects add reversible, barrier separated express lanes. The **I-75 South Metro** project will bring 12 miles of new Express Lanes to Clayton and Henry counties; it’s expected to open to traffic in 2017. Construction of the **Northwest Corridor Express Lanes**, also starting this fall, will add nearly 30 miles of new Express Lanes along I-75 and I-575 in Cobb and Cherokee counties; it is expected to take four years to complete.

Next in the system pipeline would be the **I-85 extension project**, which proposes to expand the existing I-85 Express Lanes with new lanes from Old Peachtree Road north for another 10 miles into Gwinnett County. Currently in the environmental clearance phase and taking public comments, this proposed project’s tentative schedule calls for construction to begin in 2015 and completion in 2018.

Drivers who want the Express Lanes as an option for their travel and daily commutes must purchase a Peach Pass from the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA). The Peach Pass decal attaches to your vehicle window and automatically deducts the appropriate toll amount from your Peach Pass account when you choose to use any of Georgia’s Express Lanes. Having a Peach Pass will soon offer drivers the ability to pay tolls automatically when travelling outside Georgia; SRTA is working towards interoperability with toll roads in Florida and North Carolina by the end of 2014. There is also an effort toward national interoperability with a target date of 2016. Visit www.peachpass.com.

Given Georgia’s explosive population growth, Georgia Express Lanes are the next logical step to help us remain competitive as a state. Georgia Express Lanes will help meet our region’s transportation needs in a cost-effective manner, as toll revenues offset costly future roadway capital, maintenance and operation costs. The lanes also support Atlanta’s vital economic development. An efficient transportation network is a critical factor in determining if businesses and jobs come here or are lost to other cities. As companies increasingly consider not only accessibility, but quality of life issues for their workers, Georgia Express Lanes help ensure metro Atlanta remains an attractive location for business.

Visit www.dot.ga.gov/expresslanes.





Photo: NITA BIRMINGHAM jbirmingham@dot.ga.gov

Quick Response Projects Small change. BIG difference.

By Nita Birmingham

Whether it's adding or extending a turn lane, or restriping an intersection, Georgia DOT's **Quick Response Program** is making a huge difference in reducing congestion and improving safety in Georgia communities.

The Georgia General Assembly used money from the state motor fuel tax to fund the program for a total of \$15.8 million in FYs 2013 and 2014. The program quickly initiates and delivers low cost (under \$200,000) operational improvements, safety and maintenance projects on state roadways. Though the projects are small, they offer big and fast returns.

A Quick Response project in Adel was as simple as adding shoulder paving so that Cook County school buses traveling west on State Route 37 could easily turn onto Bear Creek Road. Forty-two buses travel the route each morning and afternoon.

"If there was a car or truck sitting on Bear Creek waiting to turn onto State Route 37, the buses couldn't make the turn because it wasn't wide enough," Adel Director of Public Works Wayne Giddens said.

The Quick Response project widened the radius, improved the grass shoulder, extended a drainage pipe underneath the road and added a slope end section fitted with traversable safety bars.

"It's a small amount of work. It's seven feet of shoulder paving, but it's a huge improvement," District 4 Traffic Operations Manager Geno Hasty Jr. said. "Now buses can turn right from 37 to go north on Bear Creek without waiting. That was our goal."

Elsewhere in the state, a Quick Response Project in Suwanee improved traffic flow on the busy corridor of Lawrenceville Suwanee Road to Interstate 85 north. Georgia DOT eliminated an old "U-turn" median opening and extended the left turn lane. That allowed drivers getting on I-85 to move out of the way of through traffic.

Keeping through traffic flowing in Oconee County was accomplished with a Quick Response project that created a right passing lane on U.S. 441 to help drivers get around vehicles turning left onto State Route 186.

"You didn't have that many folks turning left, but you had pretty heavy mainline traffic so that one guy wanting to turn left could really gum up the works," District 1 District Engineer Brent Cook said.

How are Quick Response projects done so quickly?

Federally-funded projects can be lengthy due to "red tape," environmental reviews and planning delays. While the state also conducts environmental reviews for projects that aren't federally funded, it doesn't have to answer to as many agencies. It's a more streamlined process.

"We wanted to show what we can do with a funding source that's not federal and we've been successful," said GDOT Commissioner Keith Golden. "We can move faster and at a lower cost."

Projects are managed through GDOT's Office of Local Grants. As of the first week of July, the office identified a total of 144 projects for FYs 2013 and 2014, most of which have been completed, said David Huff, Georgia DOT assistant local grants administrator. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/Projects/Pages/QuickResponse.aspx.

What do those flashing yellow arrows mean?

By Liz Rothman

Flashing Yellow Arrow (FYA) left turn traffic signals are being installed at intersections with heavy left-turning traffic. In addition to the usual red, yellow and green arrows, the new flashing yellow arrow allows you to make a left turn after yielding to oncoming traffic and pedestrians. The FYA is a safer, more efficient left-turn signal.

NOTE: During heavy traffic the signal may skip the flashing yellow phase to increase safety. Do not anticipate the signal - just obey it.

Analysis of a flashing yellow arrow left turn signal

Solid red: STOP - no turn allowed

Solid yellow: prepare to stop or clear intersection before solid red arrow appears

Flashing yellow: ok to turn left after yielding to oncoming traffic and pedestrians

Solid green: ok to turn left; oncoming traffic must stop



Drive safer & smarter

Top End Perimeter: Variable Speed Limits & Speed Limit Increase

By Liz Rothman



To help improve safety and relieve congestion on one of metro Atlanta's busiest roadways, Georgia DOT has

launched **Variable Speed Limits (VSL)** on the Top End of I-285. The maximum speed also increased to 65 mph.

Variable Speed Limit electronic signs slow down traffic ahead of congestion or bad weather to reduce stop-and-go conditions and collisions. VSL has been implemented on the north end of I-285 only (not the south end, which has less traffic and interchanges). Increasing the maximum speed on the north side means that the entire 285 corridor now has a 65 mph limit (the south end was raised in 2013).

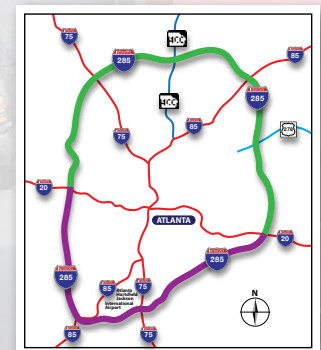
Slow down to get there faster.

Here's how VSL works. Georgia DOT's Transportation Management Center (TMC) monitors the roadway 24/7 for crashes, breakdowns, heavy congestion and severe weather. When needed, technicians electronically reduce the speed limit in 10 mph increments in and leading up to the affected area. Variable speed limit signs—176 of them—alert drivers to speed changes based on real-time conditions down the road. The key is decreasing speed disparity - keeping traffic moving at more consistent (even if slower) speeds - to help prevent the weaving, merging and sudden stops that cause collisions.

Variable speed limits offer significant benefits. "First, there is the safety factor - the reduction of crash frequency and severity, as well as the likelihood of secondary crashes," explains Commissioner Keith Golden. "Then,

there is congestion reduction. Decreasing collisions and stop-and-go conditions will keep traffic flowing more freely."

For more information and to view GDOT's VSL video, visit www.dot.ga.gov/VSL.



I-285 Top End. Variable speed limits and new maximum speed limit 65 mph

I-285 Southern End. No variable speed limits. Speed limit remains 65 mph.

Environmentally Speaking



Building bridges. And nesting platforms for birds.

By Teri Pope

It is a first for Georgia DOT. Building nesting platforms for ospreys who have built their nests on an overhead truss bridge that is part of a bridge replacement project.

The project – scheduled for construction in FY 2015 – is the Boling Bridge replacement on State Route 53 over the Chestatee River portion of Lake Lanier.

The osprey is a bird of prey - part of the raptor family. It is federally protected through the Migratory Bird Act. These large fish-eating creatures are native to the Northeast and live on large bodies of water. They are not

native to Georgia. Naturalists at the Elachee Nature and Science Center in Gainesville believe the ospreys were blown inland during their migration north about 10 years ago. They found a vacation home on Lake Lanier.

GDOT is coordinating with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to identify two locations for nesting platforms on the west side (Forsyth County) bluff - one north and one south of the bridge. The bridge with the current nest can only be demolished outside the nesting season, so that the osprey will relocate to the new nesting platforms.

The platforms are 30 feet high with a square nesting platform of four feet in diameter. Nesting platforms are commonly used in places where ospreys are native. They cost approximately \$1500 each and will be included in the contract.

The osprey family is growing. Two babies were spotted in one of their nests over Lake Lanier. Additional nests are located on the State Route 369 Overhead Truss Bridge over Lake Lanier.

Looks like ospreys enjoy their summer lake home on Lanier.



Photo: TERI POPE tpope@dot.ga.gov

Efforts paying off.

Keeping Georgia aster off federal endangered species list.

By Liz Rothman

For years Georgia DOT has relocated Georgia aster populations in advance of road improvement activities. Now GDOT has formally agreed to protect the populations of the at-risk plant.

Other parties to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Georgia Aster Candidate Conservation Agreement, signed in May at Atlanta Botanical Garden, include Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Power, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Clemson University (SC) and several North Carolina agencies. The agreement is aimed at keeping the threatened plant off the federal endangered species list.

Keeping Georgia aster off the endangered species list benefits all.

Early action improves the chance for long-term survival of the species. Landowners get greater flexibility in how they manage their land for species conservation, as well as fewer regulations and cost containment if federal protection is ultimately required. Conservation enhances our own long-term survivability and enjoyment of the planet.

“Across the South, we’ve really put an emphasis on bringing partners together to recover plants, fish and wildlife before they need protection under the Endangered Species Act,” explains Fish and Wildlife Service Southeastern Regional Director Cindy Dohner. “It’s a strategy that’s making great strides, in part because conserving one at-risk plant or animal often benefits others. Conserving Georgia aster habitat conserves habitat for rapidly declining birds like the grasshopper sparrow and eastern meadowlark.”

It looks like these efforts are paying off. The plant, a candidate for the federal list since 1999, may soon be removed from candidate status.

Each fall, Georgia DOT conducts surveys to identify roadside populations of Georgia aster. GDOT ecologists routinely work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to safeguard or relocate populations that would otherwise be impacted by roadway maintenance or construction.

The formal conservation agreement spells out efforts to protect the plant: avoid mowing rights-of-way with Georgia aster when the flower is reproducing from mid-spring to late fall; special mowing techniques; mark plant populations to avoid damage during maintenance; and avoid spraying herbicides in or near Georgia aster populations.

For information on this agreement and Georgia aster, visit www.fws.gov/asheville/htmls/conservationissues/Georgia_aster.html.

Environmentally Speaking



The Georgia aster, recognizable by its purple flower, is found in southern open woodland ecosystems with bright, unblocked sun.

GDOT Office of Environmental Services Ecologist Megan Pulver (l) and Ecology Consultant Manager Meghan Hedden (r).

Photo: CEDRIC MOHR cmohr@dot.ga.gov

Maintenance- Not Always So Routine

By Carla Murphy

“They get here and go to work.
And it’s really hot out there.
We’ve been really pleased.”

Rachel Pugh of Georgia Wheego

GDOT maintenance employee Ephraim Nickerson compacts soil using a Wacker Packer as Jerome Bartow observes and offers assistance.



GDOT maintenance worker Keith Monette

If Georgia DOT’s maintenance workers were baseball players, they would be utility infielders – capable of covering several bases and serving as the best option on defense. One day may call for striping a state route to improve safety; another may call for clearing drains to prevent flooding and accidents on an interstate highway. It’s a day in the life of GDOT’s maintenance team.

On this summer day, with temperatures approaching 90 degrees, their diverse skills are tested, as a crew of six completes the repair of what began as a small pothole that has morphed into a 10-foot-wide sinkhole.

The challenge? Dig beneath the surface of asphalt, repair the partially collapsed pipe, refill the hole with new soil and repave the roadway – while minimizing disruptions to area businesses and ensuring that the state route is safe for travel again.

“We have to be flexible,” says Assistant Highway Maintenance Foreman Darrin Godwin, “because our work changes from day to day. It’s never boring – I can say that for sure.”

Not unlike many of the jobs GDOT maintenance workers perform, this one takes them off of their “routine.” The week begins with a telephone call alerting the Department that a hole has formed in front of a car dealership in Cobb County on SR 3 Connector at SR 120. The pothole is in GDOT right-of-way. Workers inspect it and recognize that it requires an immediate fix.

“The problem seems to be with a pipe joint that loosened, which may have caused the pipe to crack,” Godwin explains. “So, we have to dig down as deep as necessary, remove the dirt and make the repair to the pipe. We then have to bring in lifts of new material, apply a sub-base of asphalt and then lay the final asphalt surface.”

As crew members maneuver equipment, others observe, carefully watching for areas that may need more material or compacting. What is obvious to onlookers – one of whom has left the car dealership to observe – is the precision with which the crew works. They explain to newer employees what is occurring and make adjustments as necessary.

Employees at the Georgia Wheego dealership are impressed. “They have been out there a couple of days; and they are always timely and so professional when they come,” says receptionist Rachel Pugh. “They get here and go to work. And it’s really hot out there. We’ve been really pleased.”

From overgrown trees to chigger bites

Of the department’s more than 4,000 employees, 44 percent are full-time maintenance workers. Almost all are assigned to district offices and area offices; and their crew sizes and assignments vary from day-to-day.

“We try to travel our routes and monitor what needs to be done every day,” says Godwin, who has been with GDOT 11 years. “We do everything from clearing vegetation, to assisting with traffic control, to removing snow and ice.”

Workers also rely on their diverse skills to make emergency repairs on vehicles. And making those repairs is not always uneventful, adds Godwin, who holds a Class A Commercial Drivers License (CDL).

For instance, Godwin recalls working on equipment during an afternoon of removing brush and tree limbs. He learned a few lessons that day – how to rely on his mechanical skills and how to tame the itching that follows chigger (tiny biting mite) bites. “What works on chigger bites is old-fashioned lye soap,” he says, recalling the time the larvae covered his clothing and legs. “You use the soap to wash your clothes and to help with the itching.”

In doing their part to help maintain the state’s 48,000 lane miles, it is not uncommon for maintenance workers to encounter everything from throngs of insects to snakes and rodents. It’s all in a day’s work, Godwin notes.



Safety – for the driving public and for workers

While the focus is consistently on maintaining the Department’s assets, ensuring the safety of employees is also critical. “Every Monday, there are safety meetings to make sure that our employees are prepared when they go out,” State Maintenance Liaison Engineer Bryan Haines points out. “But we also know that what we do every day keeps the public safe as well.”

For instance, workers assist with the maintenance of more than 6,000 state-owned bridge structures; wash signs to improve their visibility and reflectivity; stripe roadways; manage the outdoor

advertising program; and clear objects and debris from interstate and state routes to prevent serious accidents.

And days and hours before snow and ice hit Georgia interstate and state routes, maintenance workers are on alert. “Our men and women – from equipment operators to managers – are on call 24 hours a day; and they work around the clock on 12-hour shifts during a snow and ice or other weather-related event,” says Haines. “For many of them, that could mean missing holidays with families or uninterrupted sleep. They do it, because it is their job; and they have a lot of pride in what they do.”

For more information on GDOT’s work to maintain the state transportation network, visit www.dot.ga.gov.

The State Maintenance Office is responsible for all statewide maintenance activities including resurfacing roadways; routine maintenance of the state highway system; roadway striping; emergency response (roadway and weather-induced); landscaping; and developing contract documents for letting maintenance projects.

The Office also manages these GDOT programs and facilities: oversized permits; wildflower program; rest areas/welcome centers; outdoor advertising and vegetation management; and the adopt-a-highway program.



Marvin Farmer, of District 7, clears tree limbs and brush to improve visibility along a portion of Interstate 75 in Cobb County.

GATEway Grants Program

Beautifying Georgia landscapes for the traveling public.

By Liz Rothman

Georgia DOT has awarded more than \$ 1.3 million to 43 communities across the state from the 2014 GATEway Grants Program. The goal of the program is to fund enduring roadside enhancements and beautification projects along Georgia's state routes. Funds may be used only for landscape plant material and installation. GATE is an acronym for Georgia Transportation Enhancement.

One grant recipient is the Boston Tourism Committee in southern Georgia (Thomas County), who will use their \$27,216 grant to create eye-catching landscaping they hope will pull traffic off US 84/SR 38 and into the city's historic downtown. Right now there is nothing on the corner except a wooden "Welcome to Boston" sign, which will remain in place.

"We're going to landscape on both sides of the road and make that more attractive coming into Boston," Committee member Amanda Maxwell said. "Right now people don't even know there is a town off of 84. We're hoping it's going to draw interest and people will turn off 84 and come into downtown Boston." The beautification project wouldn't be possible without grant money.

"The GATEway Grant Program is a wonderful chance to partner with our local governments as they improve the landscape throughout Georgia," Georgia DOT Commissioner Keith Golden said. "We want to seize every opportunity available to us to show our local governments just how committed we are to them and to this great state."

For the 2014 program, 83 applications were submitted, with just over half being funded in the first round of awards. Project proposals ranged from interstate interchange panoramas to landscape embellishment of city entrance signs. The Department hopes to award additional grants soon.

GATEway Grants - just the facts

Funding comes from revenues collected by Georgia DOT for permits to outdoor advertising companies that allow removal of trees and other vegetation in front of billboards. By law, revenue collected from vegetation removal permits can only be spent on beautification projects.

Who can apply? Any organization, local government, or state agency can apply for a grant of up to \$50,000. This is contingent on authorization by a local government and an agreement to perpetually maintain the project.

Who determines the grant? The Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council (REBC) reviews each application and makes recommendations to the Georgia DOT commissioner. The Council is comprised of twelve members, appointed by the governor. These include the GDOT deputy commissioner; house and senate transportation committee chairs; and representatives from the faculty at UGA College of Environment and Design; Sierra Club; Garden Club of Georgia; Georgia Wildlife Federation; Georgia Conservancy; and four Outdoor Advertising Association of Georgia members.

For program details, visit www.dot.ga.gov/Gateway.

This current photo shows the entrance to the city of Nashville in southwest Georgia, transformed with a \$21,000 GATEway Grant in 2010.

Photo: NITA BIRMINGHAM jbirmingham@dot.ga.gov

GDOT TidBits

Spring Street north end detour.

Detours are in place on Spring Street in downtown Atlanta to avoid the construction area for Spring Street Viaduct (Phase 1) reconstruction. The City selected, established and maintains the detour routes

as well as temporary signals and adjusted signal timing. Detour routes for buses and pedestrians are included.

The detour will be in place through fall 2015 when the second, southern phase detour begins. Anticipated completion of the new viaduct is November 2016. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/springstreetdetours.

Transit website is one-stop source for trip planning.

Atlanta's four major public transit providers—MARTA, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress buses, Cobb Community Transit (CCT) and Gwinnett County Transit (GCT), working with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)—have launched a single website to provide information on routes, fares and itineraries. Customers can use the site to plan a trip, and find fare options and connections between the systems. Visit www.ATLtransit.org.

Permitting simplified with online access through GAPROS.

Loads that exceed legal limits for roads in Georgia need a permit. And now Georgia DOT's new automated permitting and routing system—GAPROS—simplifies the process. For information about the Georgia Permitting and Routing Optimization System (GAPROS), visit www.dot.ga.gov/OversizePermits. To order permits and create and manage your account, visit <https://gapros.dot.ga.gov>. Or call toll free 844.837.5500.

SRTA launches "Pay n Go" Peach Pass.

The "Pay n Go" Peach Pass is a convenient alternative to the regular Peach Pass account that requires a credit card and account set-up. The new prepaid reloadable Peach Pass can be purchased at participating CVS and Walgreens stores in Georgia. Drivers can buy a full starter kit that includes a transponder and reload card; or they can purchase only a reload card if they already have a transponder. Once purchased and mounted, drivers can immediately use the I-85 Express Lanes. To add toll funds, just reload the card at the cash register. Visit www.PeachPass.com or call the State Road and Tollway Authority's Peach Pass Customer Service Center at 1-855-PCH-PASS (724.7277).

The season for hurricanes.

Hurricane season officially ends November 30. If you live in one of the six highest-risk Georgia coastal counties—Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh—take note. During a hurricane, wind gusts exceeding 74 mph and torrential rain cannot only damage the shoreline, but a direct hit can mean a mandatory evacuation due to a storm surge. To get motorists inland for safety I-16 eastbound lanes would become contra-flow (reverse) lanes – making all lanes westbound from Savannah to west of US 441 in Dublin, a total of 125 miles. In an emergency, GDOT can contra-flow other interstates as well. See GDOT's hurricane brochure, preparation tips, evacuation route map and links to local and national websites at www.dot.ga.gov/severeweather.

GDOT Strategic Plan update available.

GDOT's FY 2013-2017 Strategic Plan has been updated for FY 2015. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/informationcenter and click on PUBLICATIONS.

Get traffic counts online.

For traffic counts on state routes, major county roads, or major city streets, GDOT's new traffic counts system is the place to go. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/informationcenter/statistics/Pages/default.aspx and click on ACCESS TRAFFIC COUNTS.



CONNECTOR

News for and about Employees of Georgia Department of Transportation

Letters of Praise

Julette,
I want to tell you what a terrific employee you have i.e. **Cindy Bennett**. I live @ Eagles Landing in District 3 and often spot something that needs maintenance attention with regard to entrance/exit ramps, the bridges over I-75 in my area. Any inquiry I've made to Cindy has always been handled with total courtesy and efficiency. Having been a state agency director prior to my retirement, it makes me feel proud to know that we have state workers who do such a good job dealing with public inquiries. Since people often complain about issues, I wanted to stop this morning instead to praise Cindy (and your leadership) for providing great service to citizens.

J. Neal

Editor's note: This message was sent to Julette Carter (GDOT customer service manager) regarding Constituency Liaison Cindy Bennett.

Good Afternoon.
I would like to respectfully request the sides of Highway 136 and Back Valley Road just at the foot of Lookout Mountain across from Hidden Hollow Resort be cleared off. In trying to turn right off Back Valley onto Highway 136 - trees and brush have grown up so that it is hard to see if traffic is coming down the mountain before pulling out...Also, if you are needing to go left onto Hwy 136 the small trees and brush have grown up at the guard rail there at Back Valley. Could that be cleared off as well? I know all of us that use that intersection regularly would greatly appreciate it. Thank you so much for your help in this matter.
Respectfully,

J. Ramey

Three days later, a final comment was received:
Thank you so much for responding so quickly. Clearing of the bushes has made a tremendous difference in visibility...I would like to also thank you for the work that your crew did at the intersection of 193 and 136. Traveling across where the railroad tracks were is very smooth. Your office staff that relays these work orders, and crews who carry out the work do a wonderful job.
Again, THANK YOU

@GADeptofTrans One of your Heros saved me yesterday afternoon on 75. An Angel in the City! pic.twitter.com/9GVIGDYrUS

*Editor's note: This tweet from May 2014 references **Kem Pattillo**, Badge #554.*

My morning commute includes traveling on Sheridan Rd. between Briarcliff and Cheshire bridge. It appears that with the end of the school year the traffic signal at Cheshire Bridge and Sheridan has been changed. The green signal on Sheridan has been shortened and the Left turn arrow on Cheshire bridge has been turned off. I am certain that the traffic engineers assumed that with the end of the school year and lighter traffic this would be an efficient adjustment, however, what this has created is a three (3) block back up on Sheridan in the morning of cars trying to enter Cheshire bridge.

I am requesting that this adjustment be re-evaluated and that the traffic signal at this intersection be returned to the previous setting so that the easy flow of traffic at this intersection can return.

Thank you for giving this request your immediate attention.

C. Hollingsworth

Constituency services response:
...The signal you mention is maintained by the City of Atlanta. We have taken the liberty of notifying them on your behalf...

I live on state hwy 156. I moved to this home a year ago. The ditch in my front yard...needs to be dug out so that water, dirt, and rocks can flow down and not end up in my yard. Could you help with this matter?
Thanks

Editor's note: On a Sunday our constituency liaison received the above email. One day later, she received the following message. The crew is from District 6, Area 4, Floyd County RM.

Thank you so much for your quick response. I spoke to a gentlemen and he was very nice. The crew is diligently working on clearing my ditch. I really appreciate your help in this matter.
God bless you all!

J. Phillips

On Sunday, I had a highway emergency, and your HERO employee, **Phil Dalenberg** (#561) was of enormous assistance. I had a blow out on I 285, near Perimeter Mall, and my vehicle was blocking an entire lane of traffic...Since each tire for my vehicle weighs 150 lbs, I was unable to resolve this problem. Mr. Dalenberg used two separate jacks to lift my pickup truck and then changed the tire for me. Without his assistance, we would have had a major problem for a much longer period of time. Thanks so much for employees like him.

W. Delphey

Mr. Golden,
I would like to acknowledge a couple of members on your staff. I hand delivered the GDOT recertification paperwork for my daughter, Heather Fatzinger's company (Full Circle Communications) about a week ago. The courtesy, level of attention and customer service was amazing.

The first person I encountered when I brought the paperwork in was **Brigetta Perry**. She reviewed the documentation to ensure everything was complete, and advised that one other document was needed, which we promptly sent in. We might have had a problem had she not reviewed the package so thoroughly. She was so professional, polite and helpful.

We assumed the paperwork was in process and possibly not available online yet, but my daughter was preparing a proposal that was due today, and needed documentation to support that we were certified. I spoke with **Lynette Peoples**. Again, I experienced customer service, courtesy, and efficiency not usually seen with government agencies. Ms. Peoples immediately emailed the required documentation.

I'm sure you are aware how great your staff is, but I just wanted to let you know how absolutely satisfied I was with my interactions with Ms. Perry and Ms. Peoples.
Regards,

L. Wilson

Editor's note: Brigetta Perry is DBE Coordinator and Lynette Peoples is Program Technician in the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO).

Please share your letters and emails with CONNECTOR. Email erothman@dot.ga.gov.

Above & Beyond: Commissioner's Commendation for Excellence

By Julette Carter

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Nick Mullins, Transportation Engineering Associate (TEA), District 1

District management was encouraging new TEAs like Nick Mullins to expand their interpersonal and communication skills to build stronger customer service into daily district operations. One of Mullins' first projects was designing a culvert replacement on State Route 11 in Jackson County. During the project development process an aggressive property owner ran surveyors off the property and would not allow GDOT staff to return. The situation was challenging and intimidating – to say the least.

Mullins was determined to quash the lack of understanding that was thought to have created this reaction. Since he grew up nearby, he used that to build a relationship with the owner. After he made numerous phone calls and visits, the property owner allowed GDOT back on the property to complete environmental surveys and survey work.

Mullins coordinated and consolidated the remaining work to occur on two consecutive days - minimizing the concerns of the property owner. He was on site with him both days - explaining the work, why each review was needed, federal requirements and talking through design alternatives, options and impacts. Mullins eventually gained the support of the property owner who now understood the need for the work and the federal environmental laws GDOT must follow.

Assistant District Engineer Brent Cook, nominated Mullins for the **Commissioner's Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service**. "He has demonstrated the importance of building a strong customer service focus into daily operations. Nick's diligent work to find common ground with the property owner and design the best possible project for him and the Department is extraordinary, especially for such a new employee."

PERFORMANCE

Sean Diehl, Transportation Environmental Planner, Office of Environmental Services

Six NEPA planners had come and gone when Sean Diehl - newly hired by GDOT's Office of Environmental Services - was assigned as the seventh NEPA planner on the SR 92 project in Douglasville in October 2013. Due to lack of environmental document reevaluation approval the project was in danger of missing the April 2014 let date.

When Diehl learned of the project history, environmental issues, and the accelerated milestones in need of completion to meet the let date, he did not flinch. Instead, he tackled the rigorous environmental tasks, working extensively to reach a consensus with local, state and federal agencies, and the SR 92 Project Team consisting of FHWA, GDOT, City of Douglasville, Douglas County, and Paulding County.

Moreover, Diehl received a promotion for a job in the Office of Transportation Data, effective March 2014. Faced with an opportunity to escape the seemingly unsolvable environmental issues on the SR 92 project, he instead volunteered to remain as the NEPA project planner until the issues were resolved.

Diehl's collaborative and positive attitude, persuasiveness and tenacity pushed him to forge ahead. His careful examination of local, state and federal laws resolved impacts to a historical park and he successfully received conditional FHWA approval for the environmental certification, just in time for the April letting.

Peter Emmanuel, project manager in Program Delivery, nominated Diehl for the Commissioner's Commendation for Excellence in Performance. "Sean's model work ethic contributed to saving a let date for a once-in-a lifetime project."

Recognize someone doing something exceptional! The Commissioner's Commendation for Excellence recognizes Georgia DOT employees or teams in either of two categories – Customer Service or Performance. To submit a nomination, contact Customer Service Manager Julie Carter at 404.631.1835 or jucarter@dot.ga.gov.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION WINNERS

March 2014

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Jill Franks, Railroad Liaison Engineer - Office of Utilities

Nick Mullins, Transportation Engineering Associate, District 1

Yulonda Pride-Foster, Metro Utilities Engineer and **Sharon Witherspoon**, Assistant District Utilities Engineer - District 7

Antonyo Wyche, Assistant Maintenance Foreman and **Calvin Davis**, Equipment Operator 3 - Routine Maintenance - District 4

PERFORMANCE

Sean Diehl, Transportation Environmental Planner – Office of Environmental Services

Betty Mason, Assistant Administrator, External Programs, Equal Employment Opportunity Office

Sam Woods, Design Group Manager and **Davina Williams**, Design Engineer 1 – Office of Roadway Design



Nick Mullins (center right) with Chief Engineer Russell McMurry, District 1 DE & Director of Field Services Bane Smith and Commissioner Keith Golden



Sean Diehl (center) with Chief Engineer Russell McMurry and Commissioner Keith Golden

GDOT's Natasha Davis makes engineering exciting for girls.

By Rick Parham

A dozen girls, ages 14 and 15 and each wearing a sky blue tee shirt proclaiming "We Do Math," sit at a classroom table, their eyes focused on the morning's challenge. At their side, **Natasha Davis** tutors and encourages the girls, who are enrolled in the 2014 We Do Math summer camp at Clemson University, Davis' alma mater.

Davis, a Georgia Department of Transportation construction project engineer in District One, is eager to guide the girls toward a career in one of the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math).

Davis helps them solve math and engineering problems, using robotics and remote control cars – teaching them about the science of friction and suspension by taking the cars apart and reassembling them. They also study material science and bioengineering.

She previously worked as a counselor at a camp for middle school girls – Project WISE (at Clemson's Women in Science and Engineering office). There, girls built small structures and tested them in a wind tunnel. They also built small robots and had classes in environmental and computer engineering.

Davis relishes tutoring young students – especially in math. Her first "job" in college was as a math tutor.

"In fact, if I was not working as an engineer, I'd most likely want to be a teacher. But building things, and working outdoors, is the greatest job for me," explains Davis, who grew up on a farm in South Carolina.

"Engineering is a great career for anyone. When you have a diverse group trying to accomplish a common goal, I believe the possibilities are endless. No matter what your background or gender, we all have something we can bring to the table."

Davis grew up in a family of carpenters. "I always admired the beautiful things they created. But they teased that I wouldn't want my hands getting rough. So my solution was to go to college and learn how to build things."

Her family is supportive of her career, including husband Lonzell, an AT&T technician. They have a three year old son, Gavin, and are expecting another child.

Her husband enjoys the looks on people's faces when they learn his wife is an engineer with GDOT, and "he loves the fact that I'm not afraid to get dirty." Sometimes, when driving through a highway construction zone he'll chide her when they get slowed in traffic, asking "why do y'all always have to hold up traffic?"

Davis, the only female construction employee in the Carnesville office, has been with the department for seven years. "My co-workers have always treated me fairly," she says.

Davis recently volunteered to tutor a student whose graduation was in jeopardy due to a struggle with math. "I was encouraged that she had not given up. I helped her finish a month early and she decided to go to college and get a degree in early childhood education."

Davis and a friend provide an annual \$1000 college scholarship to a graduate from their high school. She also visits schools to talk about women in STEM fields. "I enjoy the questions from the students when I share with them that I work in construction."

Davis has other passions too. "I listen to all kinds of music - in just about every genre." She enjoys travel, taking her first visit abroad in 2013 – a family trip to Okinawa, Japan. Also on her travel wish list: Germany.

Photo: CEDRIC MOHR cmohr@dot.ga.gov

CONNECTOR

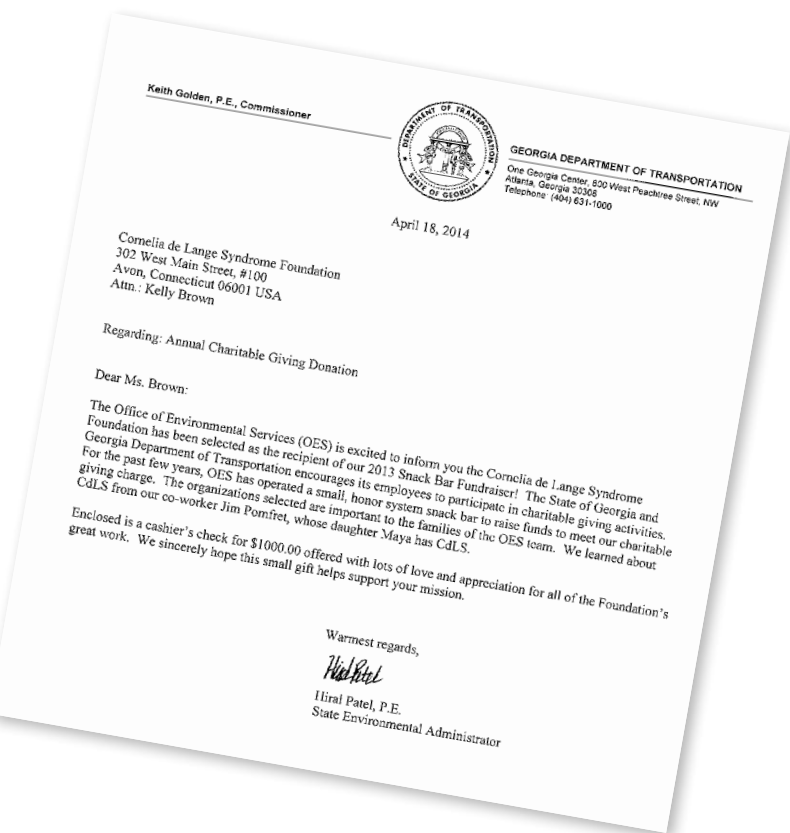
SHORTS

Looking forward. Giving back.

The 2015 **State Charitable Contributions Program** (SCCP) annual campaign has begun. This is your opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation through a payroll deduction or a one-time contribution to a cause you are passionate about. SCCP official charities meet rigorous standards and are certified by the program. Last year, GDOT employees contributed \$31,800 to local charities. Online pledging runs through October 31. Visit www.giveattheoffice.org/_sccp/.

What a great idea!

OES donates \$1000 from snacks for charitable giving



2014 GDOT Scholarship Recipients

Peri Bell - Daughter of Leslie Kelly/Materials & Testing
Deja Bickham - Daughter of **Alania Stewart**/District 7
Brooke Cox - Daughter of Thomas Cox/Design Policy & Support
Deana Crockett-Brown/Human Resources
Michael Hartle - Son of Teresa Hartle/Bridge Design
Gabrielle Jiovenetta - Daughter of John Harper/Information Technology - Infrastructure
Christopher Lindsey - Son of Christopher Lindsey/District 2
Joshua Robertson - Son of Glenn Robertson/Design Policy & Support
Morgan Simmons/Planning
Alicia White/Procurement

The Georgia Department of Transportation scholarship program for academic financial assistance is open to GDOT employees, and their spouses and children currently enrolled at an accredited U.S. college or university. Watch for details on applying for the 2015 scholarship program.

A midden is an ancient trash heap.

Studying people's trash is a great way to learn about them. That's one of many interesting nuggets you'll learn from the Archaeology Unit cultural resources project displays on exhibit at OGC.

American Indians lived near modern-day Cartersville more than 2000 years ago. Most of what is known about the **Leake Site** comes from archaeology excavations done between 2004 and 2006 prior to the widening of State Highway 61/113. GDOT recently partnered with FHWA, the University of West Georgia, and the Bartow History Museum to unveil an interpretive trail about the natural and cultural landscapes of the area. Learn about the trail and project, see examples of the interpretive panels, and view artifacts from the excavations.

The **Abercorn Archaeology Site in Savannah is an historic and living landscape.** GDOT recently completed large-scale mitigation excavations of a 19th century slave and freedmen village. Information panels discuss the project, the preservation of historic landscapes (including large live oak trees), and the archaeological excavations. You can also see a copy of *Tell Me Tree*, an illustrated children's book telling two stories: one about the people who lived in the village, and one about the archaeology done to study the site.

If you have questions or comments about these projects, or if you want to produce a display, contact Pamela Baughman at 404.631.1198 or pbaughman@dot.ga.gov.

On exhibit through November in the 4th floor meeting room waiting area at OGC.

Diversity of topics featured at fall Lunch & Learns.

While the Fall Lunch & Learn series is over, employees who attended or viewed the video-conferenced sessions became acquainted with a variety of subjects that broaden their knowledge of GDOT, as well enhance their everyday lives. From "Gellin" with Georgia Express Lanes to whetting appetites to get on board the soon-to-open Atlanta Streetcar to insights on the results of the 2014 employee survey, the Lunch & Learns offered a unique opportunity expand horizons.

Robbie Hunter, administrative coordinator I in the Office of Communications, was enthusiastic about the Atlanta Streetcar session. "The Atlanta Streetcar will add another low cost option for travel within the City of Atlanta. I was glad to find out that this is the first phase and that additional planned routes are anticipated in my neighborhood."

State Utilities Construction Engineer Shajan Joseph benefitted from the programs on buying a car and preventing identity theft. "They both provided useful, new information – things I didn't know," Joseph said. "I learned tips on negotiating with the car dealer, techniques to avoid identity theft, and procedures to follow if my identity is compromised."

Lunch & Learns are organized and hosted by Rick Parham, community education awareness coordinator in the Office of Communications. If you have suggestions for future topics (the next session is in the spring), contact him at rparham@dot.ga.gov. Visit <http://mygdot.dot.ga.gov/OurGDOT/Pages/Lunch-n-Learn.aspx>.



OGC welcomes OTD.

The **Office of Transportation Data** has moved from District 7 to four floors at One Georgia Center: 9, 18, 19 and 20. For staff locations and phone numbers, visit **mygdot** or call 404.347.0701.

GEL with GDOT!

Be a Georgia Express Lanes champion.

Do you need to pick up your child from baseball practice in Gwinnett County every Tuesday by 5:30 pm sharp? **GEL** could just be the answer for your Tuesday evening commute.

GDOT is bringing innovative transportation options to metro Atlanta and Georgia. Employees are key members of the team and our most effective ambassadors. As the Department rolls out Georgia Express Lanes (GEL), GDOT wants you to get to know all about them. When friends, family and neighbors ask questions, you'll have answers – or at the very least, you'll know where to find them.

A few employees may want to formalize their GEL activities by becoming a champion – someone who actively shares GEL information at community and neighborhood events.

The more you know, the more likely that you will want to learn even more and share information about Georgia Express Lanes. Why not start by reading the article on page 5? And be sure to catch the lighthearted **GEL with GDOT Water Cooler Q&A** videos—featuring GDOT employees—on **mygdot**. You will laugh out loud!

Georgia Express Lanes are an exciting new mobility option. Watch for opportunities to learn why. Visit the employee GEL web page, attend orientations and fun events (you can view the September Lunch & Learn presentation on **mygdot**), read internal email updates and newsletters, and visit the GEL Education Center on the 4th floor at OGC. All are designed to keep you in the know.

Get involved with GEL. Spread the word about Georgia Express Lanes.



GEL with GDOT!

- Employee GEL page on mygdot
- www.dot.ga.gov/expresslanes
- www.PeachPass.com

Congrats To All!

Retirees

May 1 - July 1, 2014

James E. Abson
Alvin Barnes
Rick H. Bilbo
Shirley Gaynell Bowman
Donna M. Brantley
Alfred A. Brown
William Nmn Burrell
Anthony Ross Bussell
Brian A. Carloss
Carolyn Faye Carroll
Richard L. Clemons
Michael A. Coleman
Rebecca J. Crane
Howell L. Dawson Jr.
Denise J. Dunagan
Vonda L. Everett
Larry G. Greene
Winfred O. Greene
Edd C. Hancock
Ricky Allen Hinton
Homer Jackson Jr.
Elizabeth Jackson Johnson
Gail Lee Johnson
Willie Curtis Jordan
Daniel E. Lancaster
Dale F. Lewis
Pamela N. Long
Harvey L. Mathis
William Allen Mauney
James E. McBride
Danny Lee Melson
Vanessa Q. Mercier
Norman A. Mock
Wilfred Nichols
Joe G. Odom Jr.
Tommy W. Padgett
Gregory P. Perry
Paul A. Poindexter
William K. Poole
James Oscar Rawls
Michael Anthony Respert
Michael Dean Roby
Mardre I. Rogers
Pamela Harden Rogers
Richard Wilson Shaw
Joseph G. Sobremonte
Lori T. Spiegel
Brenda R. Spraggins
Kenneth J. Swain
Angie P. Thornton
Sarah M. Toomer
James Herbert Torbert
Ronald Steve Waddell
Lesa A. Walker
Donnell Williams
Calvin Christopher Wright

Service Anniversaries

July 1 - September 30, 2014

30 YEARS

Kathy M. Clark
Aubrey G. Hasty Jr.
Michael Ledford
Vanessa Q. Mercier
John T. Muirhead
Connie J. Steele
Ellis O. Woodall Jr.

25 YEARS

Tessie Elaine Brown
Damon G. Carr
Daphne W. Cautela
Jeffery K. Dulworth Sr.
David Michael Eller
Lisa A. English
Thomas Fambro
Russell J. Garren Jr.
George W. Gunder
James F. Harry
James Edmond Herrin
Robert C. Jennings
Jessie Johnson
Robert R. Johnson Jr.
Ernest Talmadge Ledford Jr.
Bernard T. Martin
James T. Mitchell
Katie H. Mullins
Philip E. Partain
Rodney Dean Pedersen
Margaret Bryson Pirkle
Jimmy D. Powell Sr.
Henry Reeves Jr.
Steven Glenn Robertson
Patrick T. Ryan
Rodney Michael Ryan
Kent Searcy
Michael B. Sheppard
Gerald Gerard Stovall
Phillip E. Taylor
James C. Tomlin
Ronald C. Walker Jr.
John Allen Weaver
Kenneth R. Whitworth

20 YEARS

Thomas J. Avery
Travis T. Bennett
Robert E. Berry
Donnie B. Boyd
Ronnie Brogdon
Randall Dale Carlan
Robert Bernard Carson
Howard K. Carver
Earnest Gene Dalton
Bradley W. Dockery
Eric A. Duff
Jeffery H. Eller
Howard Franklin Fennell II

Samuel Douglas Fowler Jr.
Terrence A. Harris
Michael P. Keene
Clayton Leon McCoy
Melanie C. Morin
Gayle H. Osborne
Kevin Truitt Phillips
James Keith Pinckard
Troy David Pittman
Keith Lamar Reeves
Stan Clinton Rich
Billy Lane Richardson
Bradford W. Saxon
Johnny F. Strafford
Jenna D. Temples
Brent A. Westbrook

15 YEARS

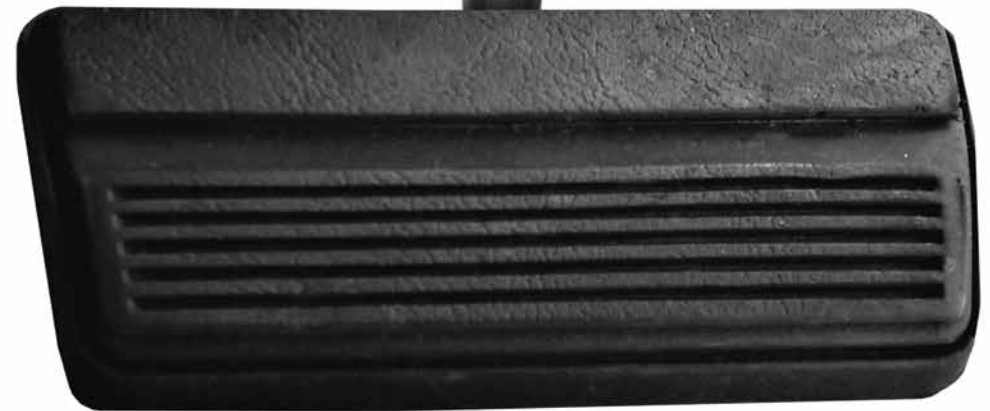
Edward D. Adams
James D. Akins
Christine Hanley Batten
George H. Bell
Frederick L. Berrong
Robert Jason Beverly
Kimberly Boyd
Jeffery Eugene Butler
John R. Caldwell
Portia Pilar Daniels
Tony L. Evans
Marvin Grady Farmer
Rodney Freeman
Nancy Ann Fuller
Jody H. Gibson
Ralph S. Griffin
Robert M. Hughes
Moussa Issa
Lillian Washington Jackson
Tunisa L.M. Jackson
Desmore A. Joseph
Ricky King
J. T. Lowery
James Brian Mansfield
Trythane Melissa Nicholas
James E. Pomfret
Pamela L. Saulsbury
James E. Shaw
Larry Smith
Knarvie L. Steed
Peronica Elaine Stephens
Vicki A. Thornton
Derrick E. Vickers
Davida Dianne Walker
Tommy L. Wiggins
Michael Alexander Williams
Christopher N. Woods

10 YEARS

Nebiat Tsehay Abraham
Robert G. Albritton
LaShone B. Alexander
Victoria S. Y. Allen
Janice Dawn Anderson

Ben C. Augustine
Dennis Ray Barron
Brandol Shamar Battle
Glenda F. Bone
Steven Nicholas Brannen
Hema G. Chaudhari
William Joseph Colbert
Brian C. Connell
Rufus Henry Daniel
Charles P. Davis
Eddie C. Davis
Richard D. Davis
Emma K. DeLouis
Darren B. Ensley
Jody Jermaine Evans
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